DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 972 CG 014 182

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TITLE Building Effective Coalitions: Some Planning Considerations.
INSTITUTION Westinghouse National Issues Center, Arlington, Va.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquent Prevention (Dept. of Justice), Washington, D.C.: Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE May 79
CONTRACT J-LEAA-004-8
NOTE 42p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Cooperation: Community Resources: *Community Services: *Information Networks: Networks: *Program Development: *Public Agencies: *Youth Programs

ABSTRACT

Coalitions of service providers are playing increasingly large roles in developing policies and programs affecting youth. Community coalitions are cost-effective, efficient ways to expand services and to increase the capacity of the community to plan and program for young people. This manual provides a basis for examination of the coalition concept, and the ways in which it could apply in specific local settings. Major topics focus on the following aspects of coalition development: (1) roles and functions, (2) definition by function, (3) implications for structure, and (4) maintenance strategies. The information was prepared for geographically specific organizations, but could be applied, in full or part, to other geographical areas. (Author/BMW)

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ED183972

BUILDING EFFECTIVE COALITIONS: SOME PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

PREPARED FOR:
THE OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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This document was supported by Contract Number J-LEAA-004-8, awarded to the Westinghouse National Issues Center, Arlington, Virginia, by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

CG 014182

MAY 1979

FOREWORD

During the past decade, coalitions or networks of service providers have played an increasingly large role in developing policies and programs affecting youth. The rewards of this approach are twofold:

- First, by working together, community agencies, organizations and groups can marshall their forces to collect information and articulate informed opinions, placing them in a position to play a significant role in youth policy formulation.

- Second, by working together, community agencies, organizations and groups can share information, skills and resources to make their own programming more responsive to the needs of youth.

This is a trend in youth programming which the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention supports and encourages. Community coalitions are a cost-effective, efficient way to increase and expand services to youth and to enhance the capacity of the community as a whole to plan and program for young people.

Although the rewards of community coalitions are evident, the processes of developing and maintaining coalitions are more difficult than many anticipate. Differing agency priorities, management styles, and operations, coupled with national competition for scarce dollars often present unanticipated barriers to coalition development. Developing and maintaining coalitions is a task which requires time and thoughtful, systematic planning.

This document, Building Effective Coalitions: Some Planning Considerations, is intended to assist communities who are interested in the development or continuation of local coalitions. It provides the basis for thoughtful examination of the coalition concept and the ways in which it could apply as a specific local setting.

Those of us who are concerned about youth must continue to explore creative ways to expand our resources. This is one strategy designed to support that end.

David D. West

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Acting Associate Administrator
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and Delinquency Prevention

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1. INTRODUCTION

As the increasingly troubled youth population continues to spark initiatives for additional and more varied services, the funds to support these services have become more scarce, thus intensifying local competition for obtaining them. Coalitions increasingly are viewed as one means to help agencies offer comprehensive services in a more coordinated and cost-effective way. While the concept of coalitions continues to gain wide acceptance, those already involved in cooperative efforts are finding that they often do not function as intended and that unforseen difficulties may inhibit them from developing as planned, if at all.

This manual has been written in response to requests for technical assistance from youth-serving organizations interested in forming or improving collaborative linkages. Specific requests have come from the following organizations, which have received grants from OJJDP under its Special Emphasis Grant Initiative in Delinquency Prevention: The Teen Center Alliance, Boston Massachusetts; Youth Services Alliance, Chicago, Illinois; the Consortium for Youth of South Central Connecticut, New Haven, Connecticut; Youth Services Network, Dallas, Texas; and Girls Coalition, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The activities of each of these grantees vary in the type and number of participating agencies, the composition and size of their target populations, and their specific approaches. All are building coalitions but, because their purposes and activities vary, each has a differing perception of how a coalition should function. There also is considerable variation in the stages of coalition development, although all seem to recognize that, by their nature, coalitions are highly fragile and dynamic. Thus, regardless of original intent, the purposes and goals must be examined constantly.

This manual is not intended to address the specific needs or problems of any one project but, rather, is intended to provide a basic systematic framework for making decisions about the most appropriate roles, organizational structure, and development and maintenance strategies for a coalition of youth-serving agencies. Because no absolutes about success and failure can be identified and because every agency and every coalition is different, this manual can serve only as a general guide.

1.1 Definitions

For the purpose of this manual, a coalition (also called a network, collaboration, federation, or consortium) is considered in the broadest possible sense, as a formalized association of predominately private, not-

for-profit organizations, in which public agencies may participate.* The stated purpose of such coalitions is to further the common goals and objectives of each member group through the combined resources, leverage, and credibility of the total membership.

Coalitions of public agencies have not been considered specifically because of differences in structure, funding, and political responsibility to elected officials or regulatory agencies. However, in view of many similarities, the manual also may serve the basic management needs of these coalitions.

The focus of this manual is at the local level, in response to the requests of the Special Emphasis Grantees, but many of the principles and strategies discussed should be applicable at the State and national levels, as well.

1.2 Organization of this Manual

The remaining chapters of this manual are organized as follows:

- Section 2: Roles and Functions of Coalitions -- Discusses the developmental process for a coalition, the benefits of a coalition, and the need to establish a purpose for its implementation.

- Section 3: Coalition Forms Defined by Function -- Discusses the five major functional categories coalitions may assume, including: Information and resource sharing, technical assistance, self-regulating, planning and coordination, and advocacy.

- Section 4: Implications for Structure -- Describes the possible variations for structuring a coalition. Specific areas that are referenced include: Membership, role of the board, composition of the board, interagency agreements, staffing, and support funding.

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*There is no clear consensus on the definition of the term "coalition" in the literature. In Friends of Friends: Networks, Manipulators, and Coalitions (NY, H. Martins Press, 1974), Jeremy Bosissevain defines a coalition much more narrowly as "a temporary alliance of distinct parties for a limited purpose." Distinctions are drawn between coalitions, networks, and federations, according to their level of formal structure. In this paper, the term is used in a much broader sense.

- Section 5: Strategies for Maintenance of Coalitions -- Presents strategies for maintaining a viable coalition, with specific suggestions for each coalition form.

2. ASSESSING FEASIBILITY AND ESTABLISHING PURPOSE

Coalitions do not spring to life fully developed. They usually evolve over a period of time in response to a visible need, growing and changing in the process. Historically, cooperative efforts of many types have accomplished great positive change, but only recently has the coalition concept for youth-serving agencies become an accepted and desirable method of operation. The possibility for an agency to retain its small, community-based focus while gaining the advantages of a larger group has great appeal. While agencies recognize, at least in theory, the numerous logistical and administrative problems and the possible loss of individual control, the many possible advantages of coalitions continue to promote their development. Most attractive are such benefits as:

- Potential for expanded scope and range of service delivery.
- Systematic avoidance of service duplication and gaps through coordinated efforts.
- Potential for simplified referral and intake procedures.
- Availability of additional and improved physical facilities, staff, and funding resources.
- Improved opportunity for experimental or pilot projects.
- Growth of political clout in advocacy for youth issues and for increased funding for youth programs.
- More community visibility for recruitment and increased funding.
- Enhanced position advantage in the competition for funding, based on size and increased service delivery capacity.
- Increased possibility for advancing both the state-of-the-art and the state-of-the-practice of coalitions in youth-programming efforts.

2.1 Assessing Feasibility

Although coalitions can and do accomplish a variety of tasks, they are not always the most effective way to deal with a given problem. Groups contemplating the coalition approach initially must consider whether a

coalition is *needed* and *feasible* for their particular purpose. Formal networks offer many advantages, but they can be time-consuming, slow-moving, and expensive. In determining the suitability of a coalition for any given purpose, the following factors should be considered:

- Evidence of need for a collaborative or coordinated service or program activity.
- Availability of resources, such as organizational expertise, staff, and funds.
- Cost-effectiveness.
- Compatability of member groups with the philosophy and purpose of the coalition.
- Probability of providing for member groups increased membership, expanded services, or additional funding.
- Possibility of avoiding duplication of programs.
- Necessity for avoiding depletion of resources of existing programs.
- Possibility of effecting change in existing agencies.
- Existence of community recognition of the need for a coalition.

2.2 Formation of Coalitions

Once an individual or group determines that a coalition approach may be workable, the actual formulation process begins. Often, individuals informally contact other individuals or groups to discuss their mutual needs and brainstorm about ways these might be handled. A legislative or administrative crisis or a natural disaster may quickly mobilize a group to accomplish a specific task. Usually, an ad hoc or steering committee is formed to explore the possibilities of a formal linkage in which they and others to be recruited might participate. These "grass roots" groups tend to be enthusiastic and fairly cohesive, at least during their initial formation.

Coalitons brought together because of an outside stimulus, such as a funding source, which mandates formation of a coalition as a condition of funding, form more quickly in a more deliberate manner. The agency initiating the collaborative effort usually becomes the lead agency and assumes major responsibility for organization, administration, and funding distribution. If a coalition is initiated by an official or governmental body,

the group must choose its own leadership, since the initiator has no continuing role in the coalition and merely acts as facilitator.

The way in which a coalition is initiated has definite implications for the purpose that the coalition will pursue and, ultimately, for the structure and function of the group. If the effort is grass roots in response to a mutual need, the options for action are numerous. If the group is responding to a direct funding initiative, specific criteria already will have been set that will dictate the activities and, therefore, the supporting structure.

2.3 Establishing Purpose

Regardless of the developmental process followed by the coalition, the primary responsibility of the initial meetings is to define the coalition's purpose. This purpose, agreed to by all the participants, will dictate the structure and function of the coalition. If technical assistance is to be the purpose, a mechanism for identifying resources and delivering training will have to be developed. If the purpose is advocacy, those with a direct stake in the outcome and those with clout to change conditions must be included. No coalition can be effective unless the purpose is clearly defined and well understood by all participants from the outset.

Coalitions can serve more than a single purpose but, because of the inherent operational and coordination problems, few can manage effectively many purposes at the same time. In some cases, multiple purposes may, by their nature, prove to be conflicting. For example, taking a strong advocacy role and trying to broker funds from outside sources may not be compatible. If the implications of each purpose are fully explored and the problems of each anticipated, it is possible to do multiple things; however, the division of labor must be clear and the tasks differentiated. If a new purpose just "slips in," the chances for success diminish greatly.

3. COALITIONS FORMS DEFINED BY FUNCTION

This chapter presents five coalition models, defined by their purpose, as a tool to aid in the refinement process. The five include:

- Information and Resource Sharing.
- Technical Assistance.
- Self-Regulating.
- Planning and Coordinaton of Services.
- Advocacy.

In general, the Information and Resource Sharing, the Technical Assistance, and the Self-Regulating coalitions work internally to improve the capacities of their member agencies. In contrast, the Planning and Coordination and Advocacy coalitions do the majority of their work externally; that is, they attempt to impact the entire youth-serving system rather than just their own members.

3.1 Information and Resource Sharing Coalition

To establish a comprehensive and solid information base, this type of coalition serves a definite clearinghouse function; that is, it gathers, collates, files, and disseminates information in specific areas of interest to the coalition. The objectives of such a coalition might include:

- Providing a means of information exchange (e.g., state-of-the-art findings and trends, funding initiatives, and available resources).
- Providing a forum for open discussion.
- Developing a knowledge base for planning, community education, or advocacy activities.
- Recognizing individual and group achievement and contribution.
- Providing a system for maximum use of physical facilities, staff, and financial resources of member agencies.
- Assisting member agencies in making appropriate referrals.

Information exchange often begins between individuals and grows into an organized effort. Possible areas of exchange might include the following:

- Program ideas/trends.
- State-of-the-art research information.
- Data about the target population and community.
- Funding opportunities.
- Youth policy issues.
- Legislative developments.
- Youth job opportunities.
- Available staff positions.
- Lists of available speakers, programs, or training materials.

The information often is gathered in a central location with specific staff or volunteers who are assigned the responsibility for cataloguing it in some easily retrievable way. A resource center at an accessible and convenient location should be established for the use of all members.

An information coalition often publishes a regular or special events newsletter for its members and for the community which provides a master calendar and descriptions of special services and events. The coalition may: Sponsor discussion groups, conferences, or seminars to deal with common problems; schedule informal get-togethers for members; or organize a sharing system for physical facilities, such as a pool or kitchen. To increase service capacity, staff members with special expertise may be loaned or exchanged.

Further possibilities exist if the participating agencies are willing and/or able under their bylaws to pool program funds. The coalition then might be able to purchase goods or services that would be beyond the means of any individual member. To extend the possibilities of service to youth, they might purchase audiovisual equipment or a van that would be used by all agencies according to a schedule they would establish. They also might be able to purchase direct services by an accounting or legal firm for general administrative assistance in the operation of the coalition or of any of the individual agencies. Central computer services might be purchased by the coalition for both its own use and the use of all member agencies.

Except for the major purchases of equipment or services that require special funds and specific written agreements, an information and resource sharing coalition can operate on a small scale and modest budget.

3.2 Technical Assistance Coalition

Technical assistance coalitions have a narrower focus than information and resource sharing groups, although they often participate in similar activities. The ultimate purpose is to promote and reinforce positive change in member agencies. To accomplish this goal, the coalition emphasizes the delivery of technical service on a resource-sharing or fee-for-service basis to member agencies, to help them improve their service or operating capacities. It also may offer direct and indirect training and technical assistance, as well as developing and distributing an inventory of resources, skills, and expertise available within the coalition. Outside consultants may be hired for additional expertise.

This type of group usually operates out of a central office, with a coordinator arranging for technical assistance as necessary and appropriate in such areas as:

- Funding.
- Grantsmanship.
- Planning.
- Needs assessment.
- Evaluation.
- Increasing youth or volunteer participation.
- Improving publicity and public information.
- Group process.
- Management skills.

The coalition may arrange workshops or seminars, or produce "how to" manuals in the greatest need to all members.

In practice technical assistance coalitions rarely exist for the sole purpose of capacity building for member agencies. On the assumption that the necessary resources are available for the actual delivery of technical assistance, this function can be integrated successfully with information and resource sharing. A technical assistance component can be included in a planning and coordinating coalition and can assist member agencies in meeting standards set by a self-regulating coalition.

3.3 Self-Regulating Coalition

A self-regulating coalition does not have the legal authority of regulatory agencies, but it serves a similar function for its members. The coalition assumes responsibility for setting minimum standards by which all the members agree to abide. It may develop definitions as part of these standards and design an overall evaluation system. In addition, it provides certification for those agencies that demonstrate compliance. This certification provides a base for expansion or replication of a project activity and for soliciting additional funding support. The coalition may serve as a monitor for its own members or for outside groups, or it may recommend to the funding agency specific funding for members.

This type of coalition might be formed by an association of runaway shelters or youth service bureaus. The self-regulating model is the least likely to occur as a single-purpose coalition and usually occurs in combination with the information and resource sharing and the technical assistance groups. Such an organization encourages the upgrading of agency programs and increases standards of performance. Agencies and coalitions certified as having met certain standards have a competitive edge in soliciting funding.

3.4 Planning and Coordination of Services Coalition

This type of coalition may be formed through a mutual desire to change a situation or by mandate as a condition of funding. If the impetus is grant funding, there usually is a requirement for a lead organization to be responsible for disbursement of funds, as well as for implementation of the overall project. If mutually agreeable guidelines are not established at the beginning, putting the purse strings in the hands of a single agency often raises internal resentment and causes lack of cooperation by participating organizations.

Although the benefits of planning and coordination can be great, the realization of these ideals often is illusive. Individual agencies are often committed to their own programs, frequently view other agencies as competitors (which they are), and often mistrust the lead agency. This type of coalition is the most likely to have problems among the members over territoriality and the use of funds.

Planning and coordination coalitions may spend so much time and effort working with the present system (e.g., inventories, gaps, duplications) that they postpone or eliminate looking towards the future. Since the ultimate purpose of this type should be to produce a changed vision among member agencies of what the future might be, regardless of present realities, this overemphasis on existing systems hinders significant progress.

With the image of an ideal system in mind, the assessment of youth and program needs and the charting of the range and scope of existing

systems need not become ends in themselves. Whether done formally or informally, these inventories should give a clear idea of the goals and operating methods of the participating agencies. Ideally, they also should give an indication of where duplications exist but, in practice, many coalitions experience great difficulty in defining and documenting duplication. No agency wishes to lose program or staff; thus, any proposed program deletions or combinations pose a real threat.

Some coalitions of this type concentrate on the planning aspects and serve their members only in an advisory capacity. Others undertake coordination of activities, such as establishing a master calendar of events, developing a standard intake and referral process, or a single contact system for the members of one family. They also may recruit members to fill service gaps that become more visible in a coordinated system.

A few coalitions choose to provide direct services in addition to those provided by member groups. Since any new program is viewed as competition, extreme care and tact are needed to make direct service by the coalition a viable program. Programs can be developed by the coalition that involve several agencies or the youth participants from various agencies. The expanded resources in a coalition also can make experimental or pilot projects possible which, if successful, could be replicated by the member agencies.

In general, coordination and expansion of services increases the opportunity for community participation and provides more credibility for future programming and funding opportunities. This type of coalition also acts as a liaison with other private agencies, as well as with public youth organizations, and thus serves as a single focal point for public agencies to interact with the private sector. Through this type of liaison, coordination possibilities can be enhanced further.

3.5 Advocacy Coalition

Advocacy coalitions often are formed in response to a specific crisis situation, such as a pending legislative proposal to build a detention center. They also may develop in response to a more generalized need, such as lack of recreational facilities. Because of the more complex issues they address and because their purpose is ongoing and more proactive, these general groups expect to have a longer life than those formed for a specific legislative battle. Possible targets for advocacy efforts might include:

- Quality education.
- Increased resources for youth or for a specific target population.
- Health care and health care education.

- Quality shelter care.

- Rights for juveniles in court or schools.

Advocacy coalitions may be formed to work towards enhancing the power and resources of youth-serving agencies. Such coalitions may lobby for: Greater appropriations for youth programs; inclusion of a representative of a member agency on a city or State board or other policy group; or increased direct service to youth. When successful, these efforts may extend their benefits far beyond the target population.

Members of advocacy coalitions can function in a variety of ways. On a continuing basis, they may be members of policymaking boards, special committees, or task forces. They may monitor ordinances, legislation, or executive orders or policy decisions, and then speak directly to those who effect change. They also may launch extensive public education campaigns to gain support for specific issues.

As part of their vital community education work, advocacy coalitions often increase public attention to an issue by using various forms of mass media. Through these efforts, they bring pressure to bear on policymakers. One favorite technique is a massive letter-writing campaign in which community residents and agencies are requested to participate.

Advocacy coalitions tend to grow as they become more visible, since many will rally to a "good cause." Because their purpose is limited and their target group small and well defined, advocacy coalitions do not have the administrative problems of some other types. However, they do need strong and determined leaderhip and a well-developed communication system. Advocacy coalitions usually avoid getting into direct service programs so they will not be vulnerable to financial pressures of the funding sources in the general community.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR STRUCTURE

Once the purpose is clearly defined and the objective identified which will fulfill that purpose, the structure of the coalition can be developed. Key issues to consider during this stage are:

- Coalition membership.
- Board of directors' role and responsibilities.
- Board composition.
- Interagency agreements.
- Staffing.
- Funding.

Because a coalition is like a business in many ways, these structural issues must be considered, regardless of coalition form. Because of diverse pressures and differing stages of development when crucial structure decisions are made, most coalitions cannot "start from scratch." Many adapt already existing practices and procedures of member agencies. However, some are able to look beyond the operating practices of members and to examine new ways of operating before making a decision. Outside help often is required for this process.

The expected life span of the coalition should be kept in mind in determining its structure. Some coalitions -- usually advocacy -- intend to put themselves out of business as soon as possible. Others, such as information and resource sharing, expect to continue indefinitely. Even a short-term, single-task coalition must have a defined structure, but this need not be so elaborate nor so formalized as that of a long-term, direct-services delivery group.

Setting up a working coalition means dealing in practical realities, and compromise and trade-offs are essential. All members must accept the fact that coalitions are difficult because their structure is horizontal rather than vertical and because the cooperation necessary to make them work may be contrary to the vested interests of individual members.

4.1 Membership

Coalitions grow at varying rates. Advocacy coalitions formed around a "hot" issue often grow rapidly. Planning and coordination coalitions, formed in response to a specific grant, tend to grow slowly because of established restrictions, limited objectives, and hesitation by members to dilute their funds and services by increasing

membership. In any case, the optimum size for carrying out the specified purpose should be considered before a membership policy is established. Membership may be open or closed, that is open to anyone who expresses an interest or selective (closed) on the basis of firmly established criteria. Such criteria usually include the ability to meet a specified standard or the capacity to offer a special skill or service. Often, there is a trade-off between broadening the base for impact and advocacy and maintaining high standards. Closed systems usually have a guarantee of continued funding at some level.

Rapid growth itself may become an issue. If membership grows beyond the capacity of the funding base support, problems may arise in the selection of who will receive funds. If growth has not been planned for, management and staffing problems easily can immobilize the coalition.

If the coalition size does not meet expectations or if needed groups do not volunteer, then active recruitment, should be implemented. Membership should be encouraged, but only if the prospective member has the interest and/or resources to be an active participant. All members should be made aware that membership involves specific responsibilities, including a commitment of time and staff for the meetings necessary to plan and maintain the coalition. A large coalition with few active members is unwieldly. Regardless of its size, some procedures for joining and for withdrawing from the coalition should be established so that orientation is systematic, membership lists are current, and members are notified regularly of changes.

Table 4-1 gives some suggestion of implications of purposes on membership and recruitment.

The question of dues often is hotly debated during discussions of membership. Some feel that dues are never appropriate; others point out the necessity for meeting costs, especially during the formative stages. Those who support dues argue that, after a coalition is firmly established and its services set, other forms of funding can cover the necessary expenses. However, many coalitions seem to recognize that dues of any substantial amount may inhibit or prohibit membership for those most vital to the success of the group, especially for an advocacy coalition. If the aim is to have a large and varied group, as in an advocacy coalition, this stumbling block to membership may not be worth the revenue it can generate. Moreover, the collection of dues may generate additional bookkeeping duties that can divert staff time better used in other ways.

Those who argue for dues do so on the basis that dues paying is a sign of commitment and some indication of the intent to participate actively. They point out that categories of membership are possible if the membership of a coalition is mixed, and that a sliding dues scale

TABLE 4-1

Membership and Recruitment Implications

	Information and Resource Sharing	Technical Assistance	Self-Regulating	Planning and Coordination	Advocacy
Membership	Open. More members means more information and available resource	Open, if more resource and service area needed. Closed, if object is to establish a certain level of competence and service to all members.	Closed. Only those meeting standards are eligible. Membership may be contingent on efforts to comply.	Closed. Additions on basis of compatability of services offered.	Open. The greater the pressure, the better the chance of success.
Ongoing	Ongoing.	Recruitment for specific capacity.	Recruitment on basis of standards.	Recruitment for specific service capacity.	Ongoing on the basis of concern with issues and power.

can be arranged. Dues may also be paid in kind by contributions of staff services, equipment, supplies or facilities. In all cases where dues are required, clear and specific documentation for the use of such funds is essential to justify the purpose and amount.

Since resource sharing, planning and coordination, technical assistance, and self-regulating coalitions deliver a variety of direct services, these coalitions should come to some agreement on how and what kind of dues and/or fees will be paid to the coalition. Fees could be established by service category, time expended, or ability to pay. Agreements for inkind exchanges or payments can be arranged. What is important is that agreement be reached before any service is undertaken.

4.2 Role of the Board

The board of directors has the legal and fiscal responsibility for the coalition if it is incorporated. If the coalition is not incorporated, this responsibility still may be required by certain funding sources. Service coalitions generally have traditional board structures, in which the board is responsible for monitoring continuously the coalition's program and finances and for setting board and coalition internal policies and management procedures. It is up to the board to tell the staff what information it needs for program and fiscal decisions. The board supports, guides, and supervises the executive director of the coalition who then is responsible for operationalizing board policies. Other board roles might include:

- Helping to identify constituent needs.
- Drafting a statement of purpose.
- Providing access to resources.
- Hiring the executive director.
- Conducting public information or education campaigns.
- Providing expertise in general management and program development.
- Acting as final arbitrator to resolve staff or organizational conflicts.

The relationship of the coalition's board to the boards of the individual member groups should be defined clearly. All members should understand which decisions can be made by the coalition board and which need approval by the boards of the member groups.

In addition to a policy board, some coalitions also have one or more citizen or youth advisory boards whose role is strictly advisory. Such advisory boards can serve as a liaison to the community and may be instrumental in the recruitment of members and volunteers. Citizens advisory boards also can assist in fundraising activities.

Problems may arise from involvement of the board of directors in the day-to-day operation of a coalition. Often, these are caused by a lack of trust in the ability of the executive director, unclear board roles and responsibilities, and poor information flow between the coalition and the board. These difficulties can be avoided by clearly outlining board responsibilities.

The board usually makes the decision as to whether the coalition should incorporate. Like dues, incorporation is an issue over which there often is considerable debate. Because incorporation is a formal, legal process, it requires a formalized structure and specific reporting procedures. The procedure for incorporation is not complicated, but the implications of incorporation and misunderstanding of both the procedure and its connotations continue to cause confusion. The following is a list of the pros and cons of incorporation for youth-serving agencies.

- Pros:
  - Increases eligibility for funding, if tax-exempt.
  - Formalizes linkages and organizational structure.
  - Increases public visibility.
  - Provides protection against individual liability.
- Cons:
  - Limits flexibility.
  - May force a more permanent linkage than is desired.
  - Establishes a new entity that could compete for clients and funds.
  - Involves bookkeeping and legal costs for the process of incorporation and for maintaining mandated corporate records.

Although there may be advantages to incorporation, *any* coalition can exist without it; some function with a combination of incorporated and unincorporated agencies. Since only an incorporated, tax exempt entity can receive Federal grant funds, either the coalition must have that status or one of the incorporated agencies with tax exempt status must become the lead agency in the coalition. This latter type of structure has created some difficulties, since control of the purse strings then is not part of the cooperative management. Incorporation seems most vital to coordinating and planning coalitions whose intent is to broker funds. It is least advantageous to advocacy and technical assistance coalition.

4.3 Composition of the Board

The composition of the board of directors may vary according to both the purpose and size of the coalition. Boards usually evolve over a period of time, with the initiators of the coalition or the most active participants serving as the board. They then plan an ideal board which gradually builds as the terms of the original members expire. Most coalitions agree that all or a representative number of member-group executive directors should be members of the Board. If a particular executive director is not available, his authorized representative who reports directly to him is recommended as an alternate. Conflicts can arise as to whether the board represents the interests of the member or the coalition. If it is intended that the board represent the coalition's interests, board members should be chosen on the basis of needed skills rather than automatically selecting the executive directors of the member groups.

The inclusion of empowered representatives of key public agencies may enhance the prestige and clout of the board. If these representatives are unable to commit their agencies' funds or resources because of their public nature, an option is to appoint such representatives to an active advisory board.

The inclusion on the board of individuals from outside the member agencies will broaden its perspective and may increase its clout, credibility, and resources; however, this may dilute the decisionmaking ability of the board. If the coalition's program involves interfacing with public agencies (as is the case with planning and coordination, and advocacy coalitions), the participation of public agencies on the board or at least in an advisory capacity should be strongly encouraged.

Inclusion of youth members and citizen representatives on boards is an issue for all youth-serving coalitions. Certainly, participation of both is desirable and may even be mandated by the funding source but, if these individuals are to be meaningful members of boards, care must be exercised to make sure they have the experience and training to make a real contribution in board decisions. Since there is a growing consensus that consumers of services should have a voice in planning those services, many coalitions are developing a "building process" to make youth and

citizen participants on boards more than token members. In general, advocacy coalitions can use youth and citizen participants more readily than planning and coordination or technical assistance coalitions that demand a high level of expertise.

Once the composition of the board is established, some voting system should be agreed to and included in the bylaws or operating agreements. Each agency may have a single vote or each person may have a single vote. If there is a mix of agencies and individuals, a weighted system often is used. Usually, decisions are a matter of consensus; however, some formal process should be in place to use when the need for a vote occurs.

The composition of the board depends on the size and capacity of the organization. Coalitions dealing with long-range programming (such as planning and coordination, technical assistance, and self-regulatory groups) tend to have more formalized structures. Information and resource coalitions and advocacy groups need broad exposure and persons with policysetting experience. Although any of the coalition forms might include representatives of both public and private groups at one time or another, each must establish some method of selection for board slots if the size of the coalition prohibits representation of all members. Rotation is the most common method.

4.4 Interagency Agreements

A small, informal coalition may be able to operate on a verbal agreement, but a large coalition must have written guidelines, a charter, a set of bylaws, and a procedures manual or a set of operating standards. In general, interagency agreements should include the following:

- Purpose of the group.
- Conditions of membership.
- Duties and obligations of each member.
- Structure of the organization.
- Decisionmaking process.
- Selection of officers, their responsibilities, and the method of their selection.
- Duration of the agreement.

Such agreements are not critical to direct service coalitions, especially those sharing resources, and to coordination and planning coalitions involved with referrals and multiagency responsibility for programs or

individual clients. For advocacy coalitions, interagency agreements have little purpose beyond stating that expenses shall be shared. These factors are displayed in Table 4-2.

Whether the coalition incorporates or operates as an unincorporated separate service unit, written agreements between the coalition and the member agencies may be necessary. These agreements should stipulate the conditions for referrals and payments for services rendered. Similar agreements can be negotiated with public agencies. The large and more diverse the coalition is, the greater will be its need for leadership, communication, decisionmaking, problemsolving, conflict resolution mechanism, and coalition accountability.

4.5 Staffing

Staffing needs are shaped by the scope and specific programs undertaken by the coalition. For all forms, it is important to have a single individiaul, usually an executive director or coordinator, who has prime responsibility for the program. An executive director who has real decisionmaking power is vital to a planning and coordination coalition or an advocacy group; a coordinator who acts in that role only is well suited to an information and resource sharing or technical assistance coalition. All forms need adequate clerical support staff. Just how much time is needed and how many other individuals might be included must be determined on an individual basis. Support staff can be donated by members or hired directly by the coalition. Often, volunteers are used in this capacity.

As a rule, planning and coordination coalitions that operate on a full-time basis need more extensive staff than a self-regulating coalition that may operate on a part-time basis. A technical assistance coalition might operate with a coordinator, who could call on individuals to deliver technical assistance when needed, or with a full-time staff that would be directly responsible for technical assistance delivery. Advocacy coalitions may need an extensive staff, often clerical in nature, for a short time only, with a single part-time executive director able to manage ongoing business.

Most coalitions need more staff during the formation period. Once the coalition is fully operational, the size of the staff depends on the level of operation. Frequently, new coalitions do not request enough staff time in grant applications to make a significant impact.

All types of coalitions are able to use volunteer help, but not to the same extent. Advocacy and information exchange groups often rely heavily upon a volunteer component, while technical assistance and self-regulating groups may use volunteers for clerical help or occasionally for special expertise. Any volunteers must be carefully trained and well integrated into the operation of the program. Job descriptions must be

TABLE 4-2

Interagency Agreements

	Information and Resource Sharing	Technical Assistance	Self-Regulating	Planning and Coordination	Advocacy
Charters and By-laws	Bylaws to establish obligations	Bylaws to detail expectations and obligations.	Written standards essential.	Written bylaws essential to detail obligations.	Charter to establish legal entity; bylaws for procedures.
Referral and Service Agreements	Agreements on what is to be shared with whom.	Written service agreements essential.	Written agreements on service essential. No referrals.	Explicit agreement of referral and services vital.	No referral or service provided.
Agreement with Public Agencies	Possible for use of facilities and materials.	Possible for providing or requesting certain expertise.	Possible for standards evaluation and certification services.	Essential for cross-referral.	Possible, but usually informal.

very clear and lines of authority explicit. It should be noted that training and supervision of volunteers can involve significant staff time. Table 4-3 displays the implications for staffing of each of the coalition forms.

The coalition executive director is responsible for interfacing with the board. It is his or her responsibility to see that the staff carries out the priorities and meets the objectives set by the board, and to report to the board on a regular basis on coalition efforts and achievements. Other staff personnel may advise the board directly, as appropriate.

4.6 Funding

The source of funding can have a profound influence on the structure of the coalition. If the coalition is formed in response to a funding initiative, much of its direction already has been established. To qualify for certain grant and foundation funds, it may be necessary for the coalition to meet special conditions of membership, board structure, and staffing. Many programs are dependent on LEAA/OJJDP and a mix of other Federal funds with a stipulated life beyond that of the grant period. Often, funding priorities can influence board member selection and program priorities. These in turn influence staff selection.

Funding is available from many sources, both public and private. Multiple sources may be preferable to avoid total obligation or association with a single source, but multiple sources often meet more administrative work and complying with a variety of rules and regulations. Multiple funding can stablize an operation and ensure its survival, but securing this mix requires staff time and a well-developed coalition structure. Securing multiple funding usually requires a grantsperson on the staff, an established identity, documentation of organization history, and data, credibility, and leverage. Multiple funding to alleviate undue influence by a single funding source is most important for self-regulating and advocacy coalitions, and is least vital for information and resource sharing and for technical assistance coalitions.

Levels of funding influence structure because they rarely are sufficient to accomplish desired objectives. Although there often is considerable donated time and resource, these cannot always make up for lack of physical facilities and sufficient staff. As a result, there may be frequent changes in staffing, burn out problems, and general frustration. Both an advocacy and information and a resource sharing coalition can run on a minimal budget (especially if volunteers are used). The same is not true for planning and coordination coalitions that must maintain staffing and programs at a constant level. Technical assistance coalitions may be run on a fee-for-service basis, if technical assistance is delivered by member agencies, while advocacy groups often are able to solicit from the general public. Regardless of their purpose, all coalitions can be more effective if they have a constant funding level and do not have to dissipate their energies in a constant search for program funds.

TABLE 4-3

Staff Implications

	Information and Resource Sharing	Technical Assistance	Self-Regulating	Planning and Coordination	Advocacy
Staff Size	None or small; full- or part-time director; full-time secretary.	Coordinator; small if TA from member agencies; large if TA from staff; part-time secretary.	Small, part-time director; part-time secretary.	Large, full-time director; full office staff.	Varied according to stage of advocacy campaign, secretarial staff.
Volunteers	Yes; may do most of information and catalogue work.	Yes; clerical or technical provider.	Yes, but very limited function.	Yes, but very limited function.	Yes; a major component.
Staff Roles	Identifying resources; control of distribution of shared resource; coordination of volunteers and staff.	Identifying needs; planning TA; delivery or arranging for delivery of TA; evaluating TA.	Setting standards; evaluating member agencies; granting certification.	Needs assessment; planning; coordination; service delivery; monitoring; evaluation.	Planning; coordinating; implementing and evaluating; advocacy effort; oversight.

5. STRATEGIES FOR MAINTAINING COHESIVENESS

A coalition is a dynamic organization. The member agencies and the coalition itself probably will have shifting priorities, changing leadership, and frequent staff turnover. Existing funds and resources dwindle or expand with little advance notice, thus dramatically altering work in progress. Moreover, a coalition is affected by external changes in the politics and economics of the community and, thus, in community attitudes and support. The requirements of funding sources often inhibit the flexibility needed to meet these changes. Those coalitions survive that are able to anticipate and adapt. However, there are times when a coalition should cease to exist, especially if its objectives have been met. Survival, in and of itself, is *not* the ultimate objective.

5.1 Why Coalitions Fail

A good way in which to begin a study of how to maintain a coalition is to pinpoint why other coalitions have failed and, thereby, identify measures for use in planning to avoid repeating the same mistakes. A few of the many reasons for ineffectual operation or total collapse of coalitions are:

- Formation of a coalition for the "wrong" reasons. The coalition is incompatible with the mission or values of the member groups.
- Formation of a coalition without adequate purpose (i.e., too little to do).
- Presence of conflicting loyalties, vested interests, or fear of domination by another agency.
- Lack of experience in cooperative ventures.
- Lack of a stable funding base and adequate resources.
- Lack of realistic expectations about both the coalition's role and responsibilities and the amount of time and energy required for its organization and maintenance.
- Lack of awareness and knowledge of relevant trends (e.g., legislation, policy, community priorities, competition).
- Lack of organizational and management skills and/or vision. The most critical problem is lack of strong central leadership.

- Differences in member group characteristics -- image, history, values, resources, organizational and staffing patterns.

- Reluctance of member agencies to relinquish power in decisionmaking, as evidenced by subtle sabotage (i.e., postponed or unmade decision, withheld information, failure to invest staff with adequate authority, fuzzy lines of responsibility).

- Attempt to serve too many purposes.

- Difficulties in establishing a coalition identify.

- Lack of visible results or return for time or resources invested.

5.2 General Hints for Effective Coalition Operation

5.2.1 Getting Started

Coalitions often struggle in their early stages over such details as who will pay the postage on the first mailing or which agency will chair the proposed workshop. The specific arrangements for administrative management should be settled early in the planning stage and reassessed at regular intervals. Financial arrangements for a formulation period should be established until a regular source of income is realized.

5.2.2 Member Group Involvement

Early consideration should be given to member group involvement in the coalition. Even in a loosely structured coalition, each member group should have regular, specific, and meaningful responsibilities. Every member group must be supplied with adequate information to act in accordance with the purpose of the coalition. Sharing responsibilities ultimately will build more commitment to the coalition and give members a greater sense of accomplishment. Interaction should be encouraged, especially at the early stages. Regular reorientation to purposes, goals, and procedures often is necessary if active involvement is to be achieved on a continuing basis.

New members should be added because they share common goals and have a stake in the same issues, not just for their influence, their agreeable nature, or their availability at the moment. New members should be given adequate orientation. A standard orientation packet can be prepared easily that contains:

- Overview of the project and coalition, their purpose and goals, and history.

- Current brochures or public relations materials.
- Organizational chart and bylaws or operating documents.
- Roster of board members and officials.
- Budget information.
- Roster of member agencies.
- Contact person for each agency.

A new member group should be invited to a specific function or to a board meeting. If left to find information or make contacts on a trial and error basis, it will lose interest.

5.2.3 Communication

All coalitions must develop a communication system for keeping their own staffs, member agencies, and the general public informed. Staff meetings of each member agency routinely may include a brief summary of coalition activities. A coalition newsletter can report coalition activities and feature a different agency each edition. A monthly or quarterly reporting system or annual report can be instituted. Informal meetings for new and old members should be arranged on some regular basis. Agency visits, conferences, workshops, youth presentations, and fundraising benefits can aid in building communication networks.

5.2.4 Recordkeeping

Some method of keeping records of the coalition in a detailed and rational form should be established. Since membership, leadership, and staffing may change frequently, this "memory network" is vital to the continuing life of the coalition. Good records also are an essential part of a funding credibility package.

5.2.5 Development of a Timetable

Development of a timetable based on the expected life of the coalition will help to anticipate crisis points, problem issues, and variations in activity level. Members should be clear on the period of their obligation, and discussion of possible continuation beyond that time should be undertaken well in advance of the termination date.

5.2.6 Goals

Some short-term goals that can be accomplished easily should be built into the long-range plan. Positive accomplishment early in the life of the coalition will give a sense of achievement that can then be directed to the more difficult tasks. Start small and then grow!

5.2.7 Staffing

The coalition should have a primary staff person whose loyalty is to the coalition rather than to any of its members. Coalition staff personnel should have organizational skills, understanding of the voluntary nature of coalitions, and interpersonal skills to deal with necessary complexities of any cooperative venture.

5.2.8 Control of the Coalition

A successful coalition usually is run by its members so that the needs of the members as they perceive them can be met successfully. However, administrative control should incorporate sound business management techniques and use outside groups when desirable. Business and community interests can be helpful in facilitating communication and in increasing community visibility.

5.2.9 Board of Directors

Although a board of directors is mandated in the bylaws of most coalitions, it often is underused. The roles of board members should be well defined, perhaps in job profiles, and clearly distinct from that of the executive director. Board members should receive thorough orientation as to their duties, responsibilities, and authority. A mentor model may be used, especially for community representatives or youth members. The board should have regularly scheduled meetings that are announced in advance and open to interested parties; accurate minutes of these meetings are essential. Provisions for removal of board members should be included in the bylaws.

5.2.10 Leadership

A strong, dynamic leader often is the critical factor in the success of a coalition. Therefore, the selection of the executive director or coordinator is of paramount importance. For a coalition to meet successfully its operational expectations, there must be a match between the skills of the executive director and the work expectations of the board. If an executive director is hired to fill a coordinator's job, the whole nature of the coalition is likely to change, contrary to the intent of both the board and the member organizations. The individual must have proven leadership and program skills and be, to the extent possible, on equal status with the executive directors of the member groups to be perceived by them as a peer. This peer relationship is vital to promoting trust, communication, and a good working relationship between the board and coalition member groups. The coalition leader must be given adequate authority and resources to carry out his responsibilities effectively. He also must be able to delegate authority and to make sure that members are kept actively involved.

5.3 Strategies for Cohesiveness

This section presents specific suggestions for each coalition form.

5.3.1 Information and Resource Sharing

- Regularly mail the most desired information to members.
- Regularly post updates of newly available materials.
- Build a carefully selected library, which might include:
  - Federal Register.
  - Government publications on youth issues.
  - Directories of agencies and institutions.
  - State and national legislation and program trends.
  - Annual reports and brochures of member agencies and other youth-serving groups.
  - Training manuals and other "how to" materials.
  - Periodicals and journals of special interest.
  - Materials on training conference and continuing education possibilities.
  - Newspaper articles on youth issues.
  - Position papers and grant applications.
- Develop a research capacity; obtain funding through "selling" data (e.g., needs assessment, specific problem papers).
- Complete a catalogue of available material in the coalition library. This can be on cards and should be cross-referenced. Commercial systems such as the McBee Keysort are available. Computer programming makes this task simple if such service is available.

- Designate one person as liaison with public agencies, so that the contact point can be constant and the procedures clear.

- Become experts -- write position papers and reviews of literature on specific youth issues.

- If resources are being shared or property is owned in common, set up a system by which all members have equal opportunity to request use of that resource or property.

- Use media and a speakers bureau for community education.

5.3.2 Technical Assistance Coalitions

- Separate technical assistance from funding and monitoring functions.

- Make sure that the expectation is for technical assistance in "how to" and not for direct service (i.e., that technical assistance will be provided in techniques of grantsmanship, but that the specific grant will not be written by the technical assistance team).

- Develop a systematic procedure for needs assessment with each of the member groups.

- Determine what kind of technical assistance will be given on the basis of available resources; establish modes of technical assistance (i.e., workshop or individual); make sure that the criteria selection process is known to the members.

- Agree on how much technical assistance or how many days each recipient may request.

- Establish costs before promising or delivering technical assistance.

- Request an evaluation from each recipient to make sure needs have been met. Evaluations can be used to improve the quality of the technical assistance.

- Use technical assistance to increase the visibility of the coalition.

- Have one person deal with planning and implementation arrangements. Needs assessments and delivery can pull in other staff as needed.

- Schedule ahead and keep to the schedule to establish credibility.

5.3.3 Self-Regulating Coalitions

- Establish credibility with members, community, and funding sources.

- Involve member agencies in determining what will be evaluated and monitored, how, when, by whom, and for what purpose.

- Develop and publish standards for use by the coalition and its member groups and pressure public agencies to endorse them.

- Publicize the availability of certification to encourage further efforts towards quality.

- Make monitoring and evaluation an ongoing, systematic process.

- Establish basic management and administrative techniques and procedures, to regulate and guide program efforts and staff development.

- Use a positive assisting role rather than a watchdog approach that breeds suspicion and conflict.

- Make sure the resources are adequate to undertake and finish the evaluations.

- Develop policies regarding who will have access to findings, the length of a probationary period, who will evaluate the evaluators, and the use of an appeals process.

5.3.4 Planning and Coordination Coalitions

- Involve member agencies in the problemsolving process for service coordination.

- Avoid overly extensive assessments and inventories of existing services, and focus on the development of future services.

- Make sure that all parties to the coalition are agreed on whether the coalition is to offer direct services and what services are to be offered, if any. Confusion on this issue wastes administrative time and alienates members.

- Select services to be provided so as to avoid competition with or among the member groups.

- Base services on the economies of scale.

- Stress the economic advantages of coordinated services to build increased credibility with funding sources.

- Develop an efficient referral system and use it.

- Develop a mechanism to coordinate and share resources.

- Develop a management information system to reduce individual agency time spent in data reporting.

5.3.5 Advocacy Coalitions

- Define advocacy parameters and targets.

- Select initial issues carefully to guarantee success and build credibility among member groups and the public.

- Have the facts -- lack of an extensive data base undermines credibility and effectiveness.

- Choose strategies carefully; follow bureaucratic channels before going outside them; use the media or confrontation as a last resort.

- Be sure to establish the coalition as a legitimate voice of the constituency.

- Reach a consensus and then speak in a unified voice for the coalition. All statements made in the name of the coalition should be checked by a designated person before release.

- Use the connections of staff personnel, board members, and the member groups to reach sources of power.

- Be aware of political realities and of the community power structure.

- Divide responsibilities to maximize outreach. A single individual cannot do everything.

- Recruit or accept members who share a common goal. Too diverse a group will inhibit development of necessary consensus.

- Broadcast successes to attract members and funding; use brochures, annual reports, and the media.

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* U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1979 - 281-380/1678